

Five Types of Prayer

Sunday School Lesson for September 30, 2012

Lesson Purpose: To identify and understand the purpose and benefits of five types of prayer: Thanksgiving, praise and worship, repentance, petition, and intercession.

Lesson Plan: Study these five types of prayer individually using scripture references of each type.

Introduction: The different kinds of prayer addressed in this study each have their own content, purpose, and priority. For example, in the Lord's Prayer, we begin with praise and adoration ("hallowed be your name"), followed by petition for physical needs ("give us this day our daily bread"), followed by asking for forgiveness. ("forgive us our debts")

The Lord's prayer:

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, amen." Matthew 6:9-13

1. Prayer of Thanksgiving

Perhaps the most neglected prayer. However, Psalm 100 instructs the worshipper to enter His "gates with thanksgiving." Psalm 100 is called a "Psalm of Thanksgiving."

A Psalm of Thanksgiving. Make a joyful shout to the LORD, all you lands! Serve the LORD with gladness; Come before His presence with singing. Know that the LORD, He is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name. For the LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations. Psalm 100:1-5

Other thanksgiving prayer scriptures:

In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 1 Thessalonians 5:18

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Oh, give thanks to the LORD! Call upon His name; Make known His deeds among the peoples! Chronicles 16:8

Ask the class: Except for “giving thanks (saying grace)” at meals, how often do you actually thank God for what He has already done for you?

2. Prayer of Praise and Worship

Just as thanksgiving is praising God for what He has done, worship is praising Him for who He is by acknowledging His characteristics - His majesty, glory, and power.

King David’s prayer below is an example of a prayer of praise and worship:

Therefore David blessed the LORD before all the assembly; and David said: “Blessed are You, LORD God of Israel, our Father, forever and ever. Yours, O LORD, is the greatness, The power and the glory, The victory and the majesty; For all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and You are exalted as head over all. Both riches and honor come from You, and You reign over all. In Your hand is power and might; In Your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all. Now therefore, our God, We thank You And praise Your glorious name.”¹ Chronicles 29:10-13

Other praise and worship prayer scriptures:

Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. Hebrews 13:15

Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD! Psalm 150:6

And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ... Ephesians 5:18-19

Ask the class: Do you often remember to begin your prayer time with thanksgiving and worship, or do you tend to begin your prayers by asking Him to meet your needs?

3. Prayer of Repentance

In the prayer of repentance, also called the prayer of expiation or contrition, we acknowledge our sinfulness, confess our sin, “repent,” or literally “change our mind” about our sin, and ask for forgiveness and cleansing. To the Christian, this

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prayer also acknowledges that the only means of forgiveness and cleansing is through the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

Psalm 51 is perhaps the most well know prayer of repentance in the Old Testament:

A Psalm of David when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba. Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving kindness; According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Psalm 51:1-3

Other prayer of repentance scriptures:

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9

Please note that the above reference was written to the Christian, not the lost person.

The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is long suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. 2 Peter 3:9

“I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.” Luke 15:7

Ask the class: Some say we should not offer any kind of prayers (worship, thanksgiving, petition, or intercession) with unconfessed sin in our heart. Therefore, prayers of repentance should always be prayed first. Do you agree or disagree?

4. Prayer of Petition

The prayers of petition, also called supplication, are probably the least neglected type of prayer for most believers.

Ask the class: Why do you believe the prayer of petition is the most widely exercised method of prayer for most people? Possible answer; our self-centered nature.

Although a prayer of petition may be borne of selfishness, the Bible contains abundant references encouraging us to “ask” God for our needs in prayer. We “receive not” because we “ask not.”

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Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know. Jeremiah 33:3

And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive. Matthew 21:22

And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. 1 John 3:22

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. James 1:5

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God... Philippians 4:6

5. Prayer of Intercession

In a way, the prayer of intercession is similar to supplication or petition. However, intercessory prayer is prayer for others. An intercessor is one who pleads another's case.

Of course, our model intercessor is Jesus Christ, who is constantly sitting at the right hand of the Father making intercession for us. Another example in scripture of an intercessor is the Old Testament priest, who “stands in the gap” between a holy God and a sinful people.

Biblical foundation of intercessory prayer:

You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 2:5

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 1 Peter 2:9

... has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. Revelation 1:6

The above scriptures show that it is not only our privilege, but our duty as a priesthood of believers, to enter into the burden of making intercession for others. Instead of offering the blood of animals, we are to offer the sacrifices of praise.

Ask the class: Has there ever been a time when the Lord placed a burden of intercession on you? What did you do about that burden?

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Summary: Prayer is our only communication with our Creator. The Bible not only gives us reasons to pray, instructs us on how we should pray, but also gives us many examples of prayers and prayer warriors. This abundance of instruction and example gives us confidence when we pray.

Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 1 John 5:14